



**Testimony for Public Hearing
Insurance and Real Estate Committee
February 14, 2019**

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**S.B. 330: An Act Establishing a Human Right to Equal Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Health.
H.B. 6093: An Act Concerning Consideration of Immigration Status by Health Carriers.**

Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon, and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee; I write in strong support of S.B. 330 and H.B. 6093, both of which address the fundamental inequities in our current healthcare system, including inequities visible in reproductive healthcare.

S.B. 330: An Act Establishing a Human Right to Equal Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Health will bring our state policy in line with the goals of international healthcare policy, where a fundamental right to health (not limited to healthcare itself, but also encompassing factors such as access to clean water) is recognized in UNESCO's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As the World Health Organization states, "No one should get sick and die just because they are poor, or because they cannot access the health services they need. . . The right to health also means that everyone should be entitled to control their own health and body, including having access to sexual and reproductive information and services, free from violence and intimidation."ⁱ

As an advocacy organization for reproductive freedom, we particularly urge you to pay attention to the disparities that continue to exist, particularly on racial lines due to structural racism in our society, and along broader socio-economic lines, related to maternal health and mortality and access to reproductive rights. With attacks on access to basic reproductive healthcare coming from the federal government, which are clearly set up to have the greatest impact on those who already face some of the sharpest healthcare disparities (e.g. the "domestic gag rule" removing Title X funding from abortion providers and disallowing referrals for abortion care for Title X patients, and new rules trying to limit abortion coverage on our state health insurance exchange), it is imperative that Connecticut takes action as a state to promote health equity at every level.

Establishing healthcare as a human right within our state statutes will provide a framework to ensure that as we develop policy in all areas relating to health, including access for all forms of reproductive healthcare, that we are guided by core principles of equity. We urge you to strongly support this bill.



H.B. 6093: An Act Concerning Consideration of Immigration Status by Health Carriers, in some ways falls under the umbrella of healthcare as a human right. No individual in our state should face barriers to accessing healthcare because of their immigration status. Barriers to reproductive healthcare access due to immigration status have a range of direct individual impacts, such as lack of access to cancer screenings and birth control. But they also have impacts on maternal-child health. We know that poor maternal healthcare is correlated with lower birth weight, higher rates of premature birth, or other adverse effects for infants. The U.S. also has the highest maternal mortality rate of any industrialized nation. The threat of death from childbirth-related complications is magnified for those women who are not able to seek regular prenatal care, or appropriate follow-up care after giving birth.

From a reproductive healthcare standpoint, it is vital that we fight for healthcare access for each and every person in our state. H.B. 6093 is an important step forward in helping to reach this goal.

ⁱ World Health Organization. 2017. Health is a Fundamental Human Right.
<https://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/fundamental-human-right/en/> Accessed Feb 13, 2019